

THE
Churches Plea
FOR THE
Divine Presence
To Prosper
HUMANE FORCE.
IN A

SERMON Preached, June 5. 1689. Being
the Day appointed for a General Fast, and
to Implore the Blessing of Almighty God
upon *Their Majesties Arms.*

By T. CRUSO.

DEUTER. 33. 7.

*Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his
people; let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou
an Help to him from his Enemies.*

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THE
Churches of
Christ

and
their
ministry

IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SERMON
AND
ADDRESS
BY
THE
REV. J. C. B. COOPER

AT
THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN
THE
CITY OF
NEW YORK

ON
THE
SUNDAY
MORNING

THE PREFACE.

IF ever it were Seasonable, since we were a people, to sanctify a Fast, and call a solemn Assembly, we must acknowledge it to be Eminently so, when the Wisdom and Piety of our Governours lately put us upon that work. What King (sayes our Saviour) going to make War Luke 14. 31. against another, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able to meet him that cometh against him? But the consultation in such cases may be either Prudential, or Religious; and when the meer Politician upon the prospect of some visible advantages on his own side, is ready to cry out (with those forward Sons of Zebedee) We are able, the serious Chri- Mat. 20. 22.

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istian stops a while, and looks higher than any thing here below, that the strong God may be united with him, before he adventures to contend with the weakest Adversary.

How far the external strictness in most places upon this occasion, was accompanied with internal Zeal, the searcher of hearts only can determine; whether there was an awe upon mens spirits, suitable to the reverence of their Behaviour, is not known
Rom. 14. 6. to us; But if they who regarded that day, regarded it to the Lord, (and not as an Humane ordinance imposed against their wills) we need not doubt of an happy and prosperous event. A Fast which God hath chosen, (that is, when our observation is according to his Institution) is a fast which God will blesse: a day of the afflicting of souls, ushers in a day of salvation to Kingdomes: though on the other hand, all appearances of Repentance (if they are no more than appearances) make our sin the greater, and consequently may make our destruction the swifter: mens burning in unmortified lusts, while they are covering themselves with ashes turns the solemn meet-

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meeting it self into Iniquity : such a people will *Iſa. 1. 13.*
be brought lower for their pretended Humiliati-
on, and their formal Abſtinenſe ſhall fatten them
for Judgment.

There is nothing which will more betray
the inſincerity of that day's ſervices, than
the total diſcontinuance of them now ; certainly
the work, which we were then called to, could not
be well done, by thoſe who thought it the work of
a day ; great congregations are not the only
places wherein the people of God are to pour out
their hearts before him : nor is prayer at any
time to be reſtrained, till God's favourable An-
ſwers ſtir us up to the offering of praiſe. *You Iſa. 62. 6.*
that make mention of the Lord, keep not
ſilence, ſhould be a continual remembrance to us
of our continual duty ; that as we have mourned
together publickly, we may now privately mourn
apart, and follow God as cloſe with our Single
Petitions, while the cauſe remains, as we did for a
few hours with our Joynt-Requests. So might
the Kingdom of heaven ſuffer violence (as
it were) from us, and neither the Gates of Hell,
nor any Enemies upon earth be able to ſtand
before us.

To

The Preface.

To this end, I very willingly bore a small part in the late General solemnity, and should be most glad, if I could contribute any thing further, by the unwilling publication of the following Sermon; for I must own my averseness to this, as well as my readiness to the other; but if that which the urgent intreaties of some (whose undeserved affection to my person, may I hope, procure them some good by my ministry) have extorted from me, should issue in the awakening of any to their present duty, in seeking the Lord and his strength upon so great and important an occasion, I shall rejoyce on their behalf, and be encourag'd to displease my self more for the profiting of others, as well as to run the hazard of those Imputations which Ill will is always apt to cast.

I have nothing more to detain the Reader in this place with, but to beg, that the Unaccurate manner of handling may not prejudice him against the matter it self, and that he would not be offended with the thing for want of acceptable words: let all the weaknesses here discover'd, be attributed to the man, and

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and if there be any thing truly Edifying and instructive, let the honour of it be given to God, who hath taught me to account my self as one of

The meanest of his Servants,

though in the Noblest Employment.

T. C.

June 19. 1689.

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and if there be any thing more to be said
in the Preface of the Author, it is
that he has been very much assisted by

The assistance of his Secretary

and of his friends and acquaintance

T. C.

The Churches *Plea* for the Divine Presence to Prosper *Humane Force*.

PSALM 108. 10, 11.

Who will bring me into the strong City ? Who will lead me into Edom ?

Wilt not thou, Oh God, who hast cast us off ? And wilt not thou, Oh God, go forth with our Hosts ?

THis whole *Psalms*, with very little variation of *Words*, and without the least variation of *Matter*, is borrowed from *two preceding Psalms*. The *former part* of it is compos'd of the *latter part* of the 57th. *Psalms*, from the 7th. verse to the end ; the *latter part* is taken out of the 60th. *Psalms*, from the 5th. verse to the end. But whereas that (last mentioned) *Psalms* is introduc'd with a most sad and *mournful Preface*, holy *David* begins here in a more *cheerful strain*, as more suited to the *present dispensation*, under which he was. When *that Psalms* was penn'd, *David* seems to have been in *actual danger*, at the writing of *this* he is thought to have received the *Mercy*, which he prayed for before ; and he *now* records his own *Experience* of God's Goodness

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to

Dickson on the
Psalms Vol. 3.
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to him, and powerful appearance for him in former difficulties and straits, not only as a *standing encouragement* to himself, and other beleivers then, but as a *Typical pledge*, and earnest of that glorious final victory which should be obtained by the true *Militant Church* over all her intestine and foreign Enemies under the *conduct of Christ* her exalted Head and Saviour in the *Gospel Times*.

Psal. 83. 6, 7, 8.

What *David's particular Case* was, we may easily collect from other Scriptures. Before the Death of *Saul*, he had the promise from God, of succeeding in the *Throne*, and of the prosperity and flourishing of his Kingdom; when he had the possession of it, many of the *neighbouring Princes* and Nations set themselves to oppose him; among the rest, the *Philistines* did so, and the *Syrians*, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, and *Edomites*, of whose Confederacy and conjunction in that accursed Cause, the Holy Ghost gives us a distinct account. *David's* engagement in these just and necessary Wars against his, and *Israel's* Adversaries (which were continued in some measure till the very birth of *Solomon*) was the reason why God did not expect from him the *building of the Temple*; but however, God did not leave him alone in the carrying of them on, and the conquests which he made, were very considerable, according to the *hope* and *desire* of his own Heart. *Moab* (says he, *verse 9.* of this Psalm) *is my wash-pot, and over Edom will I cast out my shoe*, (expressions of great Contempt, and of the meanness and servitude of that state, which they should be brought into) *over Philistia will I triumph*. So he proceeds in the words of the Text, *who will bring me, &c.*

Some

Some conceive, that by the [*strong City*] here, in the 10th. verse is meant *Rabbah*, the *Royal City* of the Children of *Ammon*, which was so long besieged, and at last taken by *Joab*. Others think, that the Psalmist speaks to the *same subject* both in the former and latter part of the verse, and therefore apply it to the *Fortified places* in [*Edom's*] Countrey, who boasted much of invincible strength; as we may learn from the Prophet, who foretelling the destruction of *Edom*, says, *The pride of thy heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high, that sayest in thy heart, who shall bring me down to the ground?* These *Edomites*, as they were lofty and insolent, so they were old and inveterate Enemies to the seed of *Jacob*; but *David* was led (as he wisht) by a *mighty hand* of Providence to vanquish and subdue them; so that throughout all *Edom* he put garrisons, and they all became *David's Servants*.

The *Time* which he refers to, in the 11th. verse wherein God [*had cast them off*] was in the Reign of *Saul*, when the sins of the *Israelites* were justly punished, both by his *Arbitrary practices*, whom they foolishly courted, and by God's *abandoning* of them, whom they sinfully despis'd. *David's Subjects* could not but say, that it was better with them now in all respects, than heretofore; as they now lived under a more gentle and *Righteous Government*, so they enjoyed more of the smiles and blessings of Heaven.

The words contain in them two principal things.
 1. An earnest enquiry after some effectual succour. *Who will bring me into the strong City? Who will lead me into Edom?* Not that *David* was ignorant, whence

Psal. 4. 6.

such succour might be had, like the *blind world* whose *common cry* is, *who will shew us any good?* (for he had an *Eye* which was always open, to the *Everlasting Hills*) but to intimate, that he depended not upon any *Military preparations*, not upon any skill and courage of *his own*, nor upon the numbers and union of *his people*. The like passage we meet with

94. 19.

elsewhere; *Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of Iniquity?* Implying, that he wanted and sought after some further help, beyond what he had already, in the concurrence of his *Subjects* and *Allies*, whose service, though valuable and useful in its place, was not sufficient. 2. An *Humble expostulation* with

God about it. *Wilt not thou, Oh God, who hast cast us off? And wilt not thou oh God, go forth with our Hosts?* David forms his *Petition* into a *Question*, which he puts up to God with a *becoming reverence*, and yet with a *warrantable boldness*; as in other

85. 6.

places also, after the same manner; *wilt not thou revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* Which was no argument of any *distrust*, or doubt whether God would or no, but rather on the other hand signified an *hopeful confidence* that he would. I will only add, that this is such a *way of Address* to God, as the *due modesty* of *Creatures* and *Sinners* does not forbid, but the *Liberty* granted to *believers* does very much encourage.

There are several Truths included in this Text, which are worthy to be opened, and *seasonable* at this Day.

First,

First, That *In Cases of publick Commotion, by the attempts which Enemies make against us, and we against them, it behoves us to be very solicitous about the issue of them.*

I.

Secondly, That *Former rejection by God should not damp all comfortable expectation of future assistance from him.*

III.

Thirdly, That *God's favourable help is of greatest consequence to be desired and obtain'd for the making of our Arms Victorious.*

III.

I propose to handle these points *severally*, and conclude with an Application which may be suitable to *them all*, and to the design of this dayes Assembly.

The *First Thing*, which I shall endeavour to shew, is that *In cases of publick commotion, when our Enemies and we are making mutual attempts against each other, we ought to be very solicitous, that it may have an happy and successful end.* This truth is grounded upon the passionate working of *David's Spirit*, when his Forces were bent against *blondy Edom*, he seems to be zealously inquisitive about the matter, *Who will bring me into the strong City?* &c.

I.

We should not, like *Jonah*, sleep in the midst of Storms, but *rouse* our selves into a serious thoughtfulness, as to *what will become* of us and of our Countrey. We know how sharp the Disciples were upon our Saviour, when the waves beat into the Ship, and he lay upon a pillow in the hinder part of it; *Master carest thou not that we perish?* What censure then can be too severe for those, who in the greatest distresse of Nations, do scarcely manifest the least concern? Though perhaps more than a Kingdom lyes un-

Mark 4. 38.

under the hazard of perishing, there are multitudes of such a *stothful* and *careless* temper, that they will not put themselves to the trouble of *considering*; but sit at ease, till almost every thing about them is not only *shaken* but *removed*. How many, as if they were *strangers in our Jerusalem*, or worse, have no sense of the common difficulties to be encountered, nor of the *miseries* to be escap'd; but at the same time, when all good men are ready to stand with their hands upon their Loins, or to fall upon their Knees, they are perfectly stupid and secure, and shake off all fear of wrath in this World as well as that which is to come! Surely this is not a *Christian*, but a *brutish* frame; a frame most unfit to be found in *now*, when such *probable dangers* look us in the face, when both the rage and confidence of our Enemies is grown so high, and our own unthankfulness for *fresh deliverances* is so notorious. To be regardless of our present circumstances, or indifferent about them, argues an *Heart* wofully *hardned*, and is a *sin* which hath *various sins* in it. I shall mention Three which are very evident.

- I. First, It carries in it a *contempt of Providence*. For there is the *finger of God* in every *Hand* which is lifted up against us; no *Dog* can move his *Tongue* against an *Israelite*, if God think fit to *tye* it; no *man* can so much as *desire* our *Land*, if he would *restrain* and *bridle* their Affections. God can *chain up* the ambition, or the cruelty, the pride or the fury, which is in the hearts of Tyrants, tho he never intend to *purge it out*. Satan and all his Instruments, being God's *prisoners*, are limited & *confined* by him, according as he pleases; and therefore if they be in any measure *let loose*, 'tis a special dispensation which calls us to *bethink our selves*. Neither the *roaring Lyon*, nor any other *Beasts of prey* can go about,

about, seeking whom they may devour, much less could they actually devour, if God would hedge them in. Without his permission, the waster cannot find in his heart to destroy, nor lay his design, nor do any thing in order to its accomplishment; for God hath created the waster, as such. It is in his power, when he will, to seal up the hand of every man; therefore, when wicked men are suffered to disturb our peace, and we are put to defend our selves by force, 'tis an awakening summons to serious consideration. He that could prevent Balaam from cursing his people, can as easily hinder other Adversaries from assaulting them; he that moved the Officers in the Syrian Army to depart from Jeshophat, after they had surrounded him, is as able to keep them from coming nigh. The God, who gathers the wind in his fists, could block up the most threatening Fleets on their own shores; undoubtedly then, if he fill their Sails, and give them the opportunity of advancing towards ours, it ought to seize and affect our minds. 'Tis good to take heed, lest in despising the opposition of man sometimes, we despise the Providence of God.

Secondly, it discovers a want of Compassion to our Brethren. We know that the War now undertaken, is design'd for the relief of our Fellow-Protestants, as well as our own safety: so that if this should fail and miscarry, we cannot without horror reflect upon the fatal consequences of it, with respect to them, as well as our selves. If the unclean Spirit be not cast-out he will torment those poor creatures so much the more, which are already under his power. If our Enemies should have the success which we pray against, it would make their little fingers thicker and heavier than their loins

Isa. 54. 16.

Job 37. 7.

2 Chro. 18. 31.

2.

Exod. 5. 7.

2 Sam. 5. 1.

5.

loins have yet been : and wo be to those whom God shall give up to fall under *half that weight*. When *Moses* and *Aaron* did but intercede with *Pharoah* : that the people of *Israel* might go and sacrifice to God in the wilderness, he presently *increas't their task, and multiplyed their burdens*; what do we then suppose, that he would have done, if he could have overtaken them in his *pursuit* of them, and *brought them back* into his Land ? It is a *double destruction* which our Brethren must look for, if God should blast our attempts to *save* them. And besides, they are our *Brethren* also, who adventure and expose their lives in this Cause, whether in the *field*, or the *deep* : they are many of them (as the tribes of *Israel* said to *David*) *our bone and our flesh*, and their *Death* should be *precious in our sight* upon that account. How does every man, that really engages in this great Expedition, *carry his soul in his hand*, and throw himself upon the sensible brink of Eternity ? Not one of those many Thousands knows, but that the *price of his blood* may be written upon the mercy which is brought forth : should we not therefore be very thoughtful about the *gaining* of that mercy, which multitudes may *pay so dearly* for ? Is it *nothing to us*, that in all likelihood, the *sword* must cut off so many of our *Friends*, before we are fully delivered from our *Enemies* ? where is our *Humanity* and the *sounding of our bowels* ? are they all *shut up* ?

Thirdly, it betrays want of zeal for the *interest of Christ*. There is a great deal more which *lies at stake* this day, than perhaps we are all aware of at the first sight : according as God *shines upon* our *counsels*, or *overthrows* them, according as he *blesse*s, or *defeat*s what is now doing, for ought we know, it may fare well

well or ill with the *Protestant Religion*, and with all that adhere to it: (at least, *all* in these parts of the world.) God himself only is able to tell, how far the consequence of this present action may extend, as to the *raising* or *ruining*, the *supporting* or *Extinguishing* of the Reformed profession. There is manifestly that *upon the wheel*, which as God is pleased to order and determine it, may turn the scale very much as to the fall of *Sion* or *Babylon*, the upholding of the Kingdom of *Christ*, or *Antichrist*, in *Europe*. The issue of it, is likely to be very *glorious*, or very *dismal*: the *Gospel* will either *get* or *lose* much ground: *Truth* will be quite *Eclips'd* and *swallowed up* by *Strong delusions*, or else prevail and *triumph* over them. Some where (Either in the *Land of Judah*, or in the land of her *Enemies*) that *song* will be sung, *We have a strong City*. If our *Adversaries* should be permitted to *lift up their heads* now, how will they *trample* our *Holy faith* under their feet? what *havock* and *desolations* will they make, wheresoever the *name* of *Christ* is duly *call'd upon*? how would the *Conquest* of these *Kingdomes*, and of those *Provinces* that have so seasonably assisted us (which God in mercy forbid) *let them in like a flood* upon the rest of the true *Christian world*? They would no longer say, *let us break their bands in sunder*, but conclude, that they *had broken* them, and bid us in derision, to *flee as a bird to our mountain*. This in the judgment of reason must follow, if God should cast the *lot of Victory* on their side: and therefore, *is there not a cause* for the deepest concernment? must we not be (like the *Idols* of our *Enemies*), *stocks* and *stones* in deed, if we sit still and consider

Isa. 26. 1.

Psal. 11. 1.

nothing, when the *All of our Religion* seems Embarked in this bottom?

- II. The *Second* thing, which I am to prove, is that *Former rejection by God should not discourage all Comfortable expectation of future assistance.* The God that hath cast us off heretofore (as we see here in the text) may stand by us, and joyn with us afterwards. We are not to think that the *stream* of adverse Dispensations will never *turn*, or that he who seems to forget our misery *a while*, will forget it *always*. If God hath been *angry*, we must not therefore fancy, that he is *Implacable*; if his *fury* hath burnt like *fire*, it is no argument, that this fire *cannot be quenched*. Such conclusions are very absurd and irrational upon several accounts. I shall instance in *five Particulars*.

- I. First, *Providences* in this world are very *various*. This is a *changeable state*; the *face of the Skie* is not constantly alike, but sometimes *clear*, and sometimes *lowring*: 'tis neither always *free from Clouds*, nor always *Covered* with them. The Church from the beginning had her *mixture* of prosperous and afflictive days. As *Job* rebuk't his *wife* with saying, *shall we receive good at the hands of God, and not evil?* so on the other hand we may comfort our selves with this, *Have we received evil at Gods hands, and shall we not also receive good?* (though there be this disparity, that the one is *freely bestowed*, and the other *justly inflicted*.) As it is groundless *presumption*, when our *mountain stands strong*, to say, we shall *never be moved*; so 'tis unreasonable *despair*, when our *Mountain hath been shaken*, to say, we shall never be *settled*. Tho God is of *one mind*, and hath *one general end*, which is, to order and dispose all things for the *best*, yet his *Infinite wisdom* does not
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constantly observe one and the *same method* : sometimes he glorifies *himself*, and does *us* good by our *distresses*, and at other times by our *deliverance*. The *Beauty* of Divine Providences consists partly in their *Ecclef. 3. 11.*
Variety : the work of God would be lesse admirable, and his glory lesse visible, if His people were continually either under *Smiling*, or *frowning* Dispensations.

Secondly, God hath his peculiar *set times* of Executing judgment, and of shewing compassion. There is a *time* to correct, and there is likewise a *time* to *fa-* Psal. 102. 13.
vour : as Solomon sayes that there is a *time* of *War*, Eccl. 3. 8.
and a time of *peace*. God observes the proper *seasons* of giving *rest*, and causing *trouble*, of exercising us *with* Enemies, and rescuing us *from* them ; and this he is as careful to do, as to maintain and keep up the succession of *day* and *night*, of the *Summers* heat, and the *Winters* cold. Our Heavenly Father knows that we have need of both, and he knows *when* we need them ; so that our *Tranquillity* shall not be *lengthned* out too far, nor the *rod* of the oppressour remain too long, but these things shall *take their turns*, as God sees most convenient for us. What the *Apostle* says with respect to the *Resurrection*, every man in his own order, may be accommodated to this case, every thing falls out in its own order ; when one work is accomplished, God begins another ; when we have been kept low long enough in the midst of difficulties and straits, he Commands enlargement to arise. Therefore, 'tis no strange thing for God to remember *mercy* in *wrath*, and make *light* to shine out of *darkness*, and to turn the *shadow* of death into the morning. Amos. 5. 8.

Hof. 11. 8, 9.

v. 7.

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Thirdly, It is no unusual thing for *mercy* to *contract* a peoples sufferings, and *overrule* the arguments which are brought by *Justice*. Though we cannot say, that God is ever really *divided against himself*, yet when he condescends to *speak of himself after our manner*, and in compliance with our infirmity, we read of a kind of *struggling* and contention between one Attribute and another. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ?* (says God by the *Prophet*) *how shall I deliver thee, Israel ?* (as if he were vehemently prest to do it, and yet could not comply.) &c. *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together ; I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, &c.* The Righteousness and the Goodness of God seemed here to be at variance, and after some dispute (as it were) the *Goodness* of God resolved to *cease* that controversy, which his *Righteousness* might have continued ; the people were bent to *back sliding from God*, and therefore Justice was inclined to punish them still ; but *mercy* (like the *Angel* which held *Abraham's* hand, when he was going to sacrifice his *Son*) urg'd their forbearance, and prevailed. God is often *provokt* by a Nations *sins* to prolong those calamities, which he uses his *Prerogative of Grace* in cutting short. We generally deserve that God should *pluck us down*, and *root us up*, when on the contrary, 'tis his good pleasure to *build* and to *plant* us. Indeed he never yet wrought any *Salvation* for his Church, but that at the same time, when he did so, he might have gone on in the *way of his Judgments*.

Fourthly, There is the less reason to look upon former Rejections as *final*, when the *causes* of them are

are in some measure removed. Perhaps, God cast us off before, for the sake of some *National wickednesses*, which are at this day purg'd. It could not be expected, that God should upon any occasion fight for us, when the *body of the people* in the same manner which Gamaliel spoke of, were fighting against God. While Acts 5. 39. the Word of God (in a sense) was bound, I mean, while the preaching of it was restrained, no wonder that God was as a man astonied, and as a mighty man Jerem. 14. 9. that could not save. It is in vain to hide that which is too publickly known, and calls for solemn Repentance; the sin of Persecution (that mischief framed by a Law) was for many years, like Achan's accursed thing in our Camps; but God having now by the hands of our Senators opened a door for the free progress of the Gospel among our selves, one great obstacle of our Success against Foreign Enemies is taken out of the way. A Legal Indulgence to Tender Consciences was as fit a preparative to this Fast, as this Fast is to the following War. I might add, that it may be, sometimes God went not forth with our Hosts, because they went forth, not against our Popish, but our Protestant, Neighbours; when we were joyning with our Enemies against our Friends it was in Mercy to us, that God did not prosper us; when we have been helping those who sought our ruine, and weakening those that were always our refuge in distress, the assistance of his Providence would have argued his displeasure; but blessed be God, that now they who are United with us in one Faith, are also joyned in one Interest and Cause, and therefore we may somewhat better expect God's Conjunction with us now than heretofore.

Fifthly,

5.

Fifthly, Those *bitter things* which God hath formerly *written against* us, we may read a great deal of *comfort* in, upon our return to God. The *Wine of astonishment* which we have tasted, may now be made a *refreshing Cordial*. For Executions of *Treatenings* (as *One* well observes) should be taken as pawns of the performance of *promises*; the same unalterable *Truth* which binds to the one, will secure the other. We may be confident, that God was not more ready to *forfake* us during our *Impenitency*, than he is to *receive* us, when we *repent*. *Past calamities* while we were in our sins, should be improved to *strengthen our Faith* of future *mercies*, when we turn from our sins. If God hath in *faithfulness* afflicted us, why should we question his *Faithfulness* in *relieving* us? We that have felt the *lashes* of his angry *rod*, when we were running from him, shall undoubtedly experience the *succours* of his *mighty Arm*, when we come back to him. Sinners, whose *Transgressions* have been visited, are of all others the most likely to be pitied, when they become penitents. The remembrance of former *wounds*, seems to be an encouraging motive to the Church to look for a gracious *Cure*; *Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us*; *q. d.* he will heal *the* rather, because he hath torn us. If God had not cast us off *before*, we should have more reason to be jealous, that he would do it *now*.

Psal. 119. 75.

Hos. 6. 1.

III.

The *Third Thing* which I undertook to shew, is that God's *favourable help* is of *most importance* to be desired and obtained for the *making of our Arms Victorious*.

'Tis

'Tis true, that *second causes* have their proper Sphere to Act in, but the *first* is infinitely above them. God does not accustom himself in these dayes to render means *unnecessary* by Miracles, but he renders them *efficacious* by the concurrent exercise of his own power. As God does not raise up children to Abraham from the stones, but propagates an holy Seed in an ordinary way; so he does not defend us meerly by Invisible Legions of Angels, when there are Men to be employed for such a purpose. When God was about to make David King, in spite of all his opposers, he so turn'd the hearts of the Tribes of Israel, that they 1 Chro. 12. 22. came to him to help him day by day, till it was a great Host, like the Host of God. He that rules in the Armies of Heaven, makes use of Armies upon Earth too, and manages their military acts for the fulfilling of his own ends. God speaks of commanding, and calling I sa. 13. 3, 4, 5. his sanctified ones, and mustering them for the battail, and making them the weapons of his indignation to destroy the Land of Babylon. Jesus Christ appeared as Josh. 5. 14. chief Captain of the Host of the Lord, when Joshua was their visible Leader. The sword of the Lord had the preheminance, when the sword of Gideon was drawn Judg. 7. 18. also. Though David went as Champion against Goliath, he gives the glory of those Titles to God, the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel. Therefore he cries out here in the Text to God, Wilt not 1 Sam. 17. 45. thou go forth with our Hosts? alluding (as some conceive) to God's marching before the Israelites in the cloudy Pillar, which was an Emblem and Token of his presence. Psal. 68. 7. Indeed, 'tis the presence or absence of God, which makes the event of all Warlike Expeditions either good or bad; Deborah animates Barak with this, that
Sijera

- Judg. 4. 14. *Sisera would certainly fall into his hand, because the Lord was gone out before him ; and on the other side, the Psalmist complains, that God made them turn back from the Enemy, because he went not along with them.*
- Psal. 44. 9, 10. *Creatures like our selves, have their part to perform but Almighty Aids are the principal thing. Upon this account, Moses was not contented with the guidance of an Angel, without the presence of God himself ;*
- Exod. 33. 15. *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence ; implying, that it was to no purpose for them to move, if they left their God behind them. God's going forth with Armies, is eminently advantagious to them in several respects ; which I shall reduce to these four Heads.*

I. First, By enduing them with *skill* and *prudence* for their proper work. Multitudes of persons are call'd to this service, that were never *trained up* (it may be) by tedious discipline, nor have had opportunity of *improving* themselves by frequent practise, according to the *methods* and *rules* of *Art*, whom God (nevertheless) can *instruct to discretion* in this employment, as he does the *Husbandman* in his. He who is *wonderful in Counsel*, as well as *excellent in working*, does therefore many times *chuse* even in this case, the *foolish things of the World* to *confound the wise* ; men that have but little *experience*, and as little *wisdom* of such a sort, to foil the greatest *Commanders* with. What was *David* but a *raw stripling*, that ran from the *Sheepfold* to the *Camp* ; and in a little while, he was *set over the men of War*, and made himself so famous, that the *slaying of ten thousands* was ascribed to him, and but *thousands to Saul* ; the true cause of which is mentioned afterwards, *the Lord was with him*. And *David* him-

self

Isa. 28. 26.

v. 29.

1 Sam. 17. 33.

c. 18. 5.

v. 7.

v. 12.

self makes a particular acknowledgment of it, *Blessed* Pſal. 144. 1.
be the Lord my ſtrength, which teacheth my hands to war,
and my fingers to fight. He that underſtood only
 how to *handle a Crook,* or *play upon a Harp,* muſt
 needs be *taught of God,* when he came to meddle
 with *weapons of War.* God can make thoſe men con-
 ſiderable *Helpers* in a victorious Battel, whoſe Folly
 and Ignorance we might rather ſuſpect to *hinder*
 it.

Secondly, By *Inſpiring* them with *Courage.* That 2.
 God who hath put ſuch a *Nature* into the *Horſe*
 (which being a *Brute,* is not capable of the ſame
 impreſſions as a *Man*) that *He mocketh at fear,* and Job 39. 22, &c.
is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the ſword,
 &c. What a *vigour* can he eaſily *diffuſe* by his un-
 ſeen influence into the *ſpirits* of reaſonable Crea-
 tures? It is thought, that *Balaam* refers to this, when
 he ſays concerning *Jacob* and *Israel,* the Lord his God Num. 23. 21.
is with him, and the ſhout of a King is among them.
 The Preſence of God with a People creates ſuch an
 extraordinary chearfulneſs and joy, as when a Juſt
 and Gracious *Prince* comes into the *Field,* and is re-
 ceiv'd by his *Subjects* and *Souldiers* with *Univerſal*
Acclamations; it fills them with ſuch *Life,* that they
 can look innumerable *Deaths* in the face, without
paleneſs, or dejection; they value nothing that ſtands
 in their way, having the Encouragement of ſuch a
 Leader. There is no ſuch *fortitude* in the World, as
 that which proceeds from *this very cauſe;* the un-
 daunted *Chriſtian* Souldier does far exceed the *Ro-*
man; for a *Divine Principle* and Motive muſt needs
 carry men a great deal further than a *Moral.* What
hardſhips will he rejoyce to endure, what *dangers*

will he prepare to meet, who feels an *Immanuel*, God with him ! How does this strengthen mens *Hearts* and *Hands*, and raise them to a *more than Heroick* pitch ! This quicken'd *Jael* (one of the *feebler sex*) to do execution upon the *mighty Sisera* ; and hath often prompted *small Handfuls* of men to be the *bold Assailants* of the most *unequal numbers*.

Thirdly, by the *prevention* of Enemies from making any *remarkable resistance*. This God does, where he is present, two wayes ; viz. in *blinding*, and *terrifying* of them.

1. First, In the *blinding* of Enemies. I do not mean *Literally*, as God did to the *Sodomites*, who would have offer'd violence to *Lot*, and to the *King of Syria's Troopers* that were sent to apprehend *Elisba* ; but in *confounding* and perplexing of all their *Counsels* and *Designs*, and bereaving them of the *use* of that *Wisdom* and cunning which they have. When *Absalom's Conspiracy* was grown *strong* against his Father, God secured *David* by turning the subtle and *politick* advices of *Achitophel* into *foolishness* ; and this was the way of *Escape* which *David* himself sought for ; because if *Absalom* had follow'd that course which *Achitophel* chalk'd out, *David* in all probability had lost the *Kingdom*. God first *infatuates* those, whom he intends to overthrow ; he *shuts their Eyes* that they may not *find their hands* ; he throws their reason and judgment into a *dead sleep*, and so *hurries* their *disfracted* thoughts, that they cannot think *one thought* to their advantage. If God be *on our side*, he will make those that are *against us* to take those methods, whereby they shall *destroy themselves*.

2 Sam. 15. 31.

2. Secondly, In the *terrifying* of them. There are many

many Instances of this in Scripture. The Egyptians had their *Chariot wheels taken off* in the *Red Sea* by Gods *troubling* of them, and the dreadful apprehension of *his fighting* for Israel. And so it was prophesied many years after this, that *Egypt should tremble, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts.* The *Philistims* were scared with the sense of Gods coming into the *Israelitish camp*, when they shouted at the arrival of the Ark. *Saul* was perfectly *disanimated*, and lost the Spirit which he once had, when God was departed from him; and in the end became his own murderer, for fear of dying by another. So easie a matter is it, for God to change the very tempers of men from the greatest Courage, to the most sordid and shameful cowardise; as is said in the Prophet, *the mighty men of Babylon have forborn to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might hath failed, they became as women.* An Omnipotent God can in a moment take away the hearts of the stoutest Enemies; and by that means disable them from making that opposition which they would.

Fourthly, By Ordering and Governing of those things which appear most casual and contingent unto us. Those things which are wholly out of our power, God can make to serve his and our purpose. As the same Waters which stood up like a Wall for the *Israelites* of old, and fell down again for a Grave to the *Egyptians*; so God can now cause the same Sea to bear our Ships, and to bury theirs. A storm, when he pleases, can bring about his end, and our desire; and with this breath of his mouth, in the twinkling of an eye, he can do that, which many united

hands cannot in the compass of weeks or months. Every bullet that's shot, shall enter where God directs it, and the steadiest aims of men signifie nothing in comparison of the Eye of God.

He that *covers the heads* of his Friends and Favorites, can *lay open the bodies* of his Enemies, as an appointed *mark for Instruments of Cruelty*. The Man that *drew a bow at a venture*, smote the *King of Israel*, though in a disguise, *between the joints of the Harness*, because it was God that *guided the Arrow*. So when the *stone out of David's sling* sunk into *Goliath's forehead*, which prov'd his mortal wound, and the routing of the whole Host of the *Philistims*, we read, it
 1 King. 22. 34. was God that *gave him into his peoples Hands*. Accidents seemingly most *uncertain*, as well as *minute* and *inconsiderable*, carry a *great stroke* in determining of *Victories*, when God goes forth with our *Armies*.
 1 Sam. 17. 47.

Well might therefore the *Psalmist* conclude this
 ver. 12, 13. *Psalm* after such a manner; *Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man; (not vain in conjunction with God, but vain without him). Through God we shall do valiantly (we are the immediate Agents, but he furnishes with the active power, and brings forth the happy effect) for he it is that shall tread down our Enemies.*

Use.

Having thus finished the *Doctrinal* matter contained in these words, I come now to make some *Practical Improvement* of it, with a special reference to the *Occasion* of this Day. This may be best done in the *Answering of Two Questions*; one of which tends to inform us of our present *Duty*, the other will supply us with *Arguments* to back it.

The

The first Question is, *What shall we do, that our* *Quest. I.*
Pleadings with God in such a Case, for his Conduct
of us into Edom, and his Presence with our Hosts,
may be effectual? Answ. In six particulars.

First, A necessary Rule to be observed, is, to seek 1.
first the pardon of our past sins, and Reconciliation to
our offended God. This is the inlet and introduction to
all other Mercies, which are Mercies indeed; there-
fore the Psalmist does not onely take notice of God's Ps. 85. 1, 2, 3.
bringing back the captivity of Jacob, but that he had
forgiven the iniquity of his people, and taken away all his
wrath. There is no true temporal Blessing, but what
is the fruit of this spiritual one. A displeased God
may providentially deliver an unpardoned People,
but 'tis a Curse to them, rather than a Blessing; their
escape out of Calamity is a greater snare, than if they
had fallen into it. Wrath brings the punishment of the Job 19. 29.
Sword; if wrath therefore abides, after the Sword is
put up, the Nation will be miserable still; if sin (the
cause of Wrath, as Wrath is of the Sword) lye at our
doors, we are in a woful condition, though our
houses be safe from the fear of Enemies. But peace with
God, is the foundation of abundance of Comfort in
the most troublous times, and causes the soul to return
unto its rest, though the Ears be fill'd with the Alarms
of War; for if God heal the Iniquities of a Land, we may
confidently pray for the healing of its breaches, and hav-
ing regain'd his favour, we are entitl'd to his protection.

Secondly, *Put away those Sins, which would con-* 2.
tinue or revive the Enmity betwixt God and you.
Remission is beg'd and hoped for in vain, where Re-
formation is not both resolv'd and practis'd. All your
pleadings with God will be insignificant, while your
sins

sins do so loudly plead against you; their cry will be heard, and make God absolutely deaf to yours. Complain not that your Enemies are lively, while your Lusts are so; If you would be delivered from the one, you must not deliver your selves up to the other. So long as the Idols are standing in your hearts, your Idolatrous Adversaries are not like to be blown down by your prayers. It is a faithful saying, that God neither hears a sinner for himself, nor for the community, which he belongs to. Sin will make both our supplications and swords to return empty. Therefore Moses warns the Jews, When the host goeth forth against thine Enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing; i. e. then especially, above all other times.

Deut. 23. 9.

3.

Thirdly, Link your pleas by Faith to the Intercessions of Jesus Christ. Faith ought to be found in all our wrestlings with God, and fightings with men; or else we shall onely beat the air in both. This is that which hath subdued Kingdoms, and dispersed whole Armies of the Aliens. Unbelief will spoil the good effects of our Repentance, and of all our other Duties and endeavours to pacify God, or defend our selves. Indeed we affront God more by distrusting him, than we can any other way. Now the best way to support our Faith, and to secure the return of our Prayers, is to engage Christ as our Advocate with the Father. He is that Angel who pleaded for Judah and Jerusalem, at the end of the Captivity in Babylon, and whom

Heb. 11. 33, 34.

Zech. 1. 12.

13.

God immediately answered with good and comfortable words. If the hands of this Moses be held up in the Mount for our English Israel, we shall certainly prevail against the Popish Amalek here in the Valley.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Eye not *private Revenge*, nor *personal Safety* in your Requests, but the *Glory of God*. A *single Eye*, and a pure intention in the pouring out of Prayer upon such *publick* occasions, is the most material Circumstance. As men may *lust and have not*, or *fight and war*, and yet *have not*, so they may *ask and receive not*, because they *ask amiss*. God will not work to gratifie our *Malice* and hatred of others, or to indulge our *Love of Carnal Ease*, but for the advancing of his *own name*. Let this worthy end be design'd by us, and God will be very ready to *listen* to what we say, and to *forward* what we do : but if instead of being stirr'd up by unfeigned *Zeal for God*, we are transported with *heat of Passion*, and *thirst after Blood* ; we may justly look for a disappointment. The Temper of *David*, when he prayed with respect to his *Enemies*, is very imitable ; *slay them not*, Jam. 4. 2, 3. *but scatter them, and bring them down*, Psal. 59. 11. *O Lord our shield*. He did not *desire the death* of these sinners, but onely the *subversion* of their power : so should we be very well contented, though God do give our *Enemies* a longer *space of Repenting*, if he cut off their further *opportunities of sinning*. Self must not be too much concern'd in any of our *Petitions* ; we should not aim so much at our own rescue from *fear and danger*, as that the name of God may be lifted up above *Blasphemy* and *Reproach*. Plead therefore for *Victory* with him, that you may be able to *Triumph in his Praise*.

Fifthly, Be not too *positive* and *peremptory*, as to the *time* and *manner* of Deliverance from those *Enemies*, whom our Hosts do go against. For this is not *pleading with God*, but *prescribing* to him. If we
are

are *supplicants* for mercy, we ought not to be the *chusers* of our own methods for receiving and enjoying it. Such things should be freely left and submitted to God, who is *best able* and hath *most right* to order and appoint them. To say, we would have Salvation just *now*, and in such a *way*, whether God judge it expedient or no, is not to *intreat* with Humility, but to *dictate* with Confidence. If God Refuse to joyn with some *Instruments*, and will have others put up in their room, we are not to murmur with *impatience*, but acquiesce with *thankfulness*. If God do not give in the Victory at the *first Assault*, but will make us *wait* for it, and hold out our expectations, till we are almost *ashamed*, we should be satisfied, and look upon the Divine will as the fittest rule and *measure* of our own. *Particular Events* perhaps many times may not be answerable to our desires, but yet the *final issue* may. By Faith (says the Apostle) the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven *dayes*.

Heb. 11. 30.

6. Sixthly, Do not *forfeit* the benefit of Assistance and *succor from God*, by sinful *trusting in man*. There is a vast difference between *making use* of *Armies* and *Navies*, and placing our *confidence* in them. *Ships* and *Souldiers* must not be made our *Gods*; for this will provoke the *true God* to leave us to *them*, and withdraw *himself*; and, whoever they are that unite with us, or stand up for us, it may be truly said, *Wo unto us, if he departs from us*. When we make *Creatures* the *Objects* of our Faith, they become the *occasions* of our *Misery*; and when we set them up as the *Pillars* of our *Hope*, they are turned into the *Means* of our *ruine*. It is the wretched folly of Man-

Hof. 9. 12.

Man-

Mankind, that they know not how to keep Creatures in their due place; they cannot employ them, without depending on them. *Wo to them (says God) Isa. 31. 1. that stay on horses, and trust in horsemen, but look not to the Holy one of Israel, neither seek the Lord; perhaps they seek him in appearance, while they are observing such days as these, but indeed they onely mock him; their applications to God are only a formality, because they solely expect their deliverance from other hands. So commonly do we lose the advantage of the Arm of the Lord, and break or wither our Arms of flesh, by leaning too much upon them. The oftner we have committed this error heretofore, the more let us beware of it now.*

The Second Question which I proposed to answer, *Quest. II.* (and close this subject with) is, what *encouragements have we to hope, that God may go forth with our hosts, and bring us into the strong Cities of our Enemies, upon our taking of such a course, as hath been before directed? I shall mention three things to this purpose, and Conclude.*

The first ground of hope which we have, is this, that the people are God's, for whom this War is undertaken; the body of them are his by *Profession*, and many (I doubt not) among them are his in *reality*. Our Enemies cannot say so much; for they are not of the Church of God, but of the Synagogue of Satan; as they themselves are bad, so their very profession is *Anti-Christian*. We may take with us the words of the Jews in reference to their Enemies, *we are thine, thou never barest rule over them. Isa. 63. 19.*

E selves

selves under another head, who exalteth himself above all that is called God; they make mention of the names, of Saints and Angels, and not of Gods only. They are the open Enemies of the true Faith of Christ, while we are (atleast) the visible Asserters and maintainers of it. Hence we can plead a relation to God, which they cannot, and we have large experience of His Affection to us, beyond most people in the World. There are many things which confirm this truth, that the Lord loveth our Nation; and therefore we may hope, that he will deliver us, because he delights in us; so that these Kingdoms which have been his rest so long, may be his rest for ever. This is David's argument in this very Psalm, That thy beloved may be delivered, &c.

ver. 6.

2. The second thing which we may take some comfort in, is that the Cause is God's. It is not like the unjust and usual Quarrels among Neighbouring Princes, where great injuries are oftentimes falsely pretended, but the enlarging of their Empire and Dominion is chiefly aimed at, and in order to it, the Lives of their innocent Subjects are sacrificed by heaps. Here we may justly say, that the Honour of God and the welfare of his Church, besides other lesser matters of common Equity, are concern'd; and for this reason we may the better expect, that the Battle will be the Lords, and that he will manage it to his own glory, and our advantage. The bloody Tyrant against whom this War is declared, and our Arms are levelled, hath made it his business and scope for many years upon that Throne of iniquity where he sits, to blot out the name of a Reformed Church from under Heaven; and therefore God (whose

(whose work it is to protect and vindicate the Church from and against her great Oppressors) must needs be interested in this affair. *He ordaineth his arrows against the Persecutors.* Surely then so great a persecutor as that Nimrod hath been, should receive the largest portion in God's *Quiver*. While Protestant Princes and States (together with others) are provok't by his most barbarous violences to pour out their *Vials* of deserved wrath upon him, we then may also hope, that at the same time *Heaven* will inflict the *vengeance of the Temple*.

The third and last thing (which I shall hint) from whence we may gather some encouragement, is this, that the work already begun, is God's. What the Prophet says, is applicable to this time, the Lord is raised up out of his Holy habitation. The great things which he hath done for us, may embolden us to believe, that (as Christ told Nathaniel) we shall see greater things than these; and that this is but a day of small things in comparison of what we have yet to come, (unless our wretched folly and ingratitude prevent.) I would hope, that in our late Deliverance God laid the foundation of a glorious structure, and that our Adversaries (who perhaps yet think to cause the work to cease) shall never be under any temptation to say, *he began to build, but was not able to finish*. When God saved us a few months since, we were (like the rising Witnesses) set upon our feet; but there is a voice of Providence to follow, which will call us up to heaven, i. e. into a more triumphant state, though upon Earth still. It is not very probable, that he who excites us so often to the perfecting of holiness, will desist himself from the

the *perfecting of Mercy*. Though our *goodness* too is
 ter is like the *morning Cloud*, which scatters a few
 drops (it may be) and rows away, yet God's it not
 so; therefore as he *rested not* till he had compleated
 the whole *Host of Creatures* at the first, so now we
 may have some comfortable expectation of his
 going on, till he hath fully restored the *peace and pro-*
sperty of his people. He that hath hitherto so remark-
 ably *prevented our destruction*, is the same God, whom
 we at this day seek unto for the *working out* of our
Salvation.

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